DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 431 996 CG 029 392

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TITLE Building School Communities: A District Success Story.
INSTITUTION CenterSource Systems, Sausalito, CA.
PUB DATE 1998-06-00
NOTE 8p.; The authors are trainers for the "Tribes" product.
AVAILABLE FROM The "Tribes" product is available from CenterSource Systems, 85 Liberty Ship Way, Suite 104, Sausalito, CA 94965; Tel.: 415-289-1700; Web site: www.tribes.com; E-mail: centrsrc@aol.com
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Educational Environment; Elementary Education; Secondary Education; Student Development
IDENTIFIERS Hawaii (Oahu); *Learning Communities; *Tribes Approach

ABSTRACT

This paper, provided by the vendor of the product being described, discusses a program implemented in the Central Oahu School District in Honolulu, Hawaii called "Tribes." The mission of Tribes is to promote the healthy development of every child in the school community so that each has the knowledge, skills, and resiliency to be successful in the rapidly changing world. The program also seeks to engage all teachers, administrators, students, and families in working together as a learning community that is dedicated to caring and support, active participation, and positive expectations for all students. The 30 educators who initially took the Tribes basic training in 1993 practiced the process in their various settings. There are currently 72 certified Tribes trainers in Hawaii. Results from student, teacher, and school climate surveys indicate that components implemented the most frequently involve the Tribes agreement. Results show that teachers' and students' perceptions of practices are consistent. Perceptions varied by individual schools. The qualitative data showed that resources and support that would be most helpful in implementing Tribes would be site support groups to dialogue, plan, and share ideas. Changes reported as a result of Tribes were positive. Significant improvement was reported in student relationships and mutual respect. Teachers reported the climate of classrooms and schools as more comfortable, settled, and respectful. A second important change was the use of the common Tribe language by students and teachers. Implications of this program are discussed. (Contains one graph, four references, and five resources.) (Author/MKA)

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Building School Communities
A District Success Story

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"Systems do not change themselves, people change them."
—Michael Fullan

Teachers and administrators throughout the Central Oahu School District of Honolulu, Hawaii, have a story to tell. It is about transforming classroom and school environments into supportive learning communities by implementing a caring process called "Tribes." The reculturing of Hawaiian classrooms began with a small group of thirty educators. In only four years, that number increased to more than 2,500 school personnel at both the elementary and secondary levels. How did this occur?

The Hawaii Tribes Trail

"This is a Tribes school!," Judith Johnson, Program Director from the Northwest Regional Educational Lab, said five years ago to principal Nancy Latham upon completing her visit to the Mokulele Elementary School on Hickam Airforce Base in Honolulu, Hawaii. Judith was visiting the school following its award from the U.S. Department of Education as a National Drug Free School. She was taken by the warmth shown from students not only towards her, but also amongst the children themselves. This incident proved to be the seed for Nancy Latham not only to learn about the process of Tribes but also to introduce and practice it at Mokulele. That step led her to become a change agent for the many Central Oahu District schools.

Nancy often had mentioned to her staff that they needed to do much more than teach students math and reading skills. Although academics were a priority, all recognized that if students do not make responsible decisions they may lose their opportunities to become productive, happy citizens. Mokulele was already working on creating a climate where students learned to make smart choices, to be kind to one another, and to show respect to all. This, however, was occurring at an "instinctive" level without structure or a systematic process.

In early 1993, Nancy Latham attended the Western Regional Conference in Portland to present Mokulele's nationally recognized drug free schools program. She was urged by Judith Johnson to attend the Tribes full day session and to have lunch with Jeanne Gibbs. This is when Nancy learned that Tribes is a democratic group process based on twenty years of research that Gibbs had summarized on school climate, human development, child development and the dynamics of organizational systems. Jeanne Gibbs conclusions indicated that positive school environments could be significant in promoting academic learning and social development.

The mission of Tribes to promote "the healthy development of every child in the school community so that each has the knowledge, skills and resiliency to be successful in our rapidly changing world," captured what Nancy was seeking for her students. Further, the goal, "to engage all teachers, administrators, students, and families in working together as a learning community that is dedicated to caring and support, active participation, and positive expectations for all students" was her vision for the school. (Gibbs, 1995, p.22)

Thus, Nancy's quest to create school communities through the democratic process of Tribes emerged. That summer, she scheduled a basic four-day Tribes training and convinced twelve staff members to attend. Her enthusiasm and constant sharing of her Portland experience with Tribes motivated other district schools also to participate.

The thirty educators who initially took the Tribes basic training in 1993 practiced the process in their various settings. During the first year, teachers conducted Saturday sharing sessions with interested teachers to include them in the new process. Interest continued to grow as other teachers began to hear and learn about

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Tribes. In the summer of 1994, nine teachers and a principal made the trip to San Francisco to attend a Tribes Training of Trainers 5-day workshop to become certified district trainers to conduct training throughout the District.

Since then, more than seventy basic four day trainings have been conducted in groups of thirty participants to include elementary as well as secondary teachers and administrators. Tribes being an inclusive philosophy and process meant that classified staffs were also considered vital members of the school community. They too were trained in modified two-day sessions. Remarkably enough, at the state level, the Department of Education Personnel Office requested training in the process in order to enhance their working relationships. The many demands for Tribes training resulted in two additional Training of Trainers workshops, exclusively for Hawaii educators. There are now 72 certified trainers.

Sustaining the process

To sustain a process is often more difficult than the initial introduction. On-going professional development and support for the trainer network became a priority. They have assisted one another to plan and facilitate courses for promotional credit. Perhaps most important they meet regularly throughout the year to work together to review, plan, share and assess what works and how to use the process most effectively. Although their leader, Nancy Latham attends, the Trainer Network meetings are facilitated by the trainers. Written "group memories" are recorded as a way to keep moving forward. The practice of regular meetings for the trainer network illustrates studies which point out that "the wider environment [of a learning community] is essential for successful change. (Fullan, 1993a, 1993b)

District leadership also has been key to supporting Tribes in schools. When Mrs. Aileen Hokama became Central Oahu District Superintendent in 1994, her priority was to create the sense of community in schools and the district. Nancy Latham was appointed to be an Educational Specialist for her team. At the same time, the State Superintendent Dr. Herman Aizawa was asserting that positive relationships among students must be addressed in schools. For superintendent Hokama, instead of searching for a "new" method or practice, this meant using the Tribes process that had already been successfully implemented in several Central District schools. She implemented the Tribes with her own staff to foster camaraderie, and modeled the group development process for the accomplishment of district level tasks. Nancy Latham continued to coordinate training, and to secure support grants.

The more that the process of Tribes was implemented and shared among the schools of the District, the more that the philosophy of Tribes and its culture for community learning became more meaningful and personal. Fullan (1993a) claims vision and strategic planning come later...after initial practice. Initially, the vision for the teacher was for classroom use, and for the administrator, a means to build effective school practices. Once the decision was made to have school based trainers the caring process of Tribes moved beyond classrooms to the whole school environment and to a vision for the district.

Assessing the Process

Personnel of the district and a selected number of five elementary schools recognized the importance of conducting an assessment of Tribes. The purposes of the evaluation were to help the school communities reflect upon their use of Tribes; to assist in documentation of the outcomes; and to plan for future interventions. Our questions were:

1. How does teacher perception and student perception compare with the implementation of the Tribes process in the classroom?
2. How do teacher, resource teachers, administration, and the perceptions of classified staff compare with the implementation of the Tribes process school-wide
3. What recommendations (strategies and activities) would be useful to grade level teachers (grades 3-6) and administrators/school leadership groups to strengthen the implementation of the Tribes process?

Of the five participating schools, four had been involved in an initial pilot study conducted by Dr. Flora B. Yen of the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (Yen, F.B., 1996) to develop ***The Assessment Kit: Reflecting on the Tribes Process*** for CenterSource Systems. This assessment primarily collects information to show schools the extent to which the components of the Tribes process are being used within classrooms and\or the whole school. Research studies on group learning, collaboration and school climate indicate that the greater the extent of use of the components (ie:

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inclusion, active participation, appreciation, etc.), the greater will be the impact in long term outcomes, such as student learning, responsible behavior, non-violence, self-esteem, attendance etc.

Within the five selected schools, about 85% of the teachers had participated in the basic four-day Tribe TLC® training over the course of two to three years. The schools represented a cross section of the island student population including military dependents from around the nation, all socio-economic groups, multi-ethnic backgrounds, and students with special needs.

The five schools were asked to administer four survey forms from the ***Reflecting on the Tribes Process: The Assessment Kit***. To measure the Tribes process in the classroom, a student and teacher survey were administered to grades three to six. Another survey which focused on school climate was administered to all staff members, including administration, resource teachers, and classified staff. In the surveys, questions focus on the following components: beginning Tribes, the agreements, the stages of group development, reflecting, and learning. Following is a description of the components.

Description of Components

Beginning Tribes

- Meet in small groups and a community circle to relate as peers.
- Take time to build a sense of belonging in the group.
- Make sure that everyone participates equally.
- Use Tribes inclusion strategies.

Attentive Listening

- Pay attention and look at the person who is speaking.
- Know when and how to take turns speaking in the group.
- Paraphrase what people have said to let them know they have been heard.
- Use appropriate body language in response to the speaker, like nodding and smiling.

Appreciation/No Put-downs

- Avoid put-down remarks and actions.
- Compliment, appreciate, and recognize each other's gifts and talents.

Right to Pass

- Choose how much we will share about ourselves in a group activity.
- Respect each other's right to pass.

Mutual Respect

- Show respect for and welcome others-no matter what their uniqueness, ie., ethnicity, gender, age, etc.
- Show respect for and welcome newcomers.
- Respect each other's property.
- Respect individual skills, talents, and contributions.
- Respect individual privacy (no rumors or gossip).

Inclusion – *A Sense of Belonging*

- Introduce ourselves and offer a short description of our feelings, interests, resources, talents or special qualities.
- Express hopes or expectations for what will happen during the group's time together.
- Listen to others, not only for what they say but how they feel.
- Reflect on our experiences.
- Feel a sense of belonging and being a part or the group.

Influence – *To feel of value*

- Participate in setting goals for the group
- Feel comfortable in saying what we think and feel.
- Respect people's differences.
- Build on each other's strengths.
- Think about how we can contribute to the group.
- Work together to make decisions so that everyone feels they can influence others
- Work to resolve, rather than avoid uncomfortable problems and conflicts that begin to separate members.

Community – *Working together creatively*

- Solve problems creatively.
- Work together successfully to complete tasks.
- Share leadership in the group and share responsibility.
- Assess improvements and reflect upon individual and community experiences.
- Take time to celebrate achievements and successes.

Use of Processing Questions

- Incorporate Tribes' cooperative strategies in my content areas/curriculum.
- Use reflection/processing questions.

Outcomes

- Have more time for creative teaching.
- Spend less time managing student behavior.

The description of components are from Reflecting on the Tribes Process: The Assessment Kit, Yen, F.B. CenterSource Systems, LLC, Sausalito, California. 1996

School Climate Questions

The staffs also responded to the following school climate questions:

- What kind of resources or support would be most helpful to you in implementing Tribes?
- What obstacles, if any, do you face in implementing Tribes?
- If you are currently using Tribes in your classroom, what changes (if any) have you noticed?
- If Tribes is used schoolwide, what changes (if any) have you noticed?
- Please list other school improvement efforts taking place this year.

Analysis of the Data

With the data presented in graph form (see the bar chart on the next page) comparing student with teacher data, we determined that both student and teacher perceptions were important, and thus should be equally weighted. For each classroom analysis, a composite score for each component was determined by finding the average of the student and teacher rating. The components with the three highest averages were identified as areas implemented most frequently. The components with the two lowest averages indicated areas implemented less frequently. As discrepancies would be inevitable between student and teacher perceptions, it was necessary to highlight the components with a discrepancy of one or more points. We believe these discrepancies provide insight into areas that need further exploration. The same method of analysis was used for the school climate survey.

Responses to each open-ended question were sorted and tabulated for frequency for each role group. As the responses were sorted, categories for each question emerged. This data provided more insight to schoolwide implementation of the Tribes process.

Looking at the results

Results from the student, teacher, and school climate surveys indicate that components implemented the most frequently involve the Tribes agreements. Of the four agreements, Mutual Respect was implemented most consistently in all schools. The components implemented least frequently were Beginning Tribes and Outcomes.

Students perceived greater implementation in the areas of Community, Processing, and Outcomes. Teachers perceived higher implementation of students' Right to Pass. Overall, ninety-eight percent of perceptions between teachers and students had a discrepancy of less than one point. These results show that teachers and students perceptions of practices are consistent.

Perceptions of teachers, resource teachers, administration, and classified staffs of the Tribes process schoolwide varied by individual schools. In two of the schools, teachers perceived higher implementation. In two of the schools, administrators perceived higher implementation. In the last school, teachers and administration perceptions were equal.

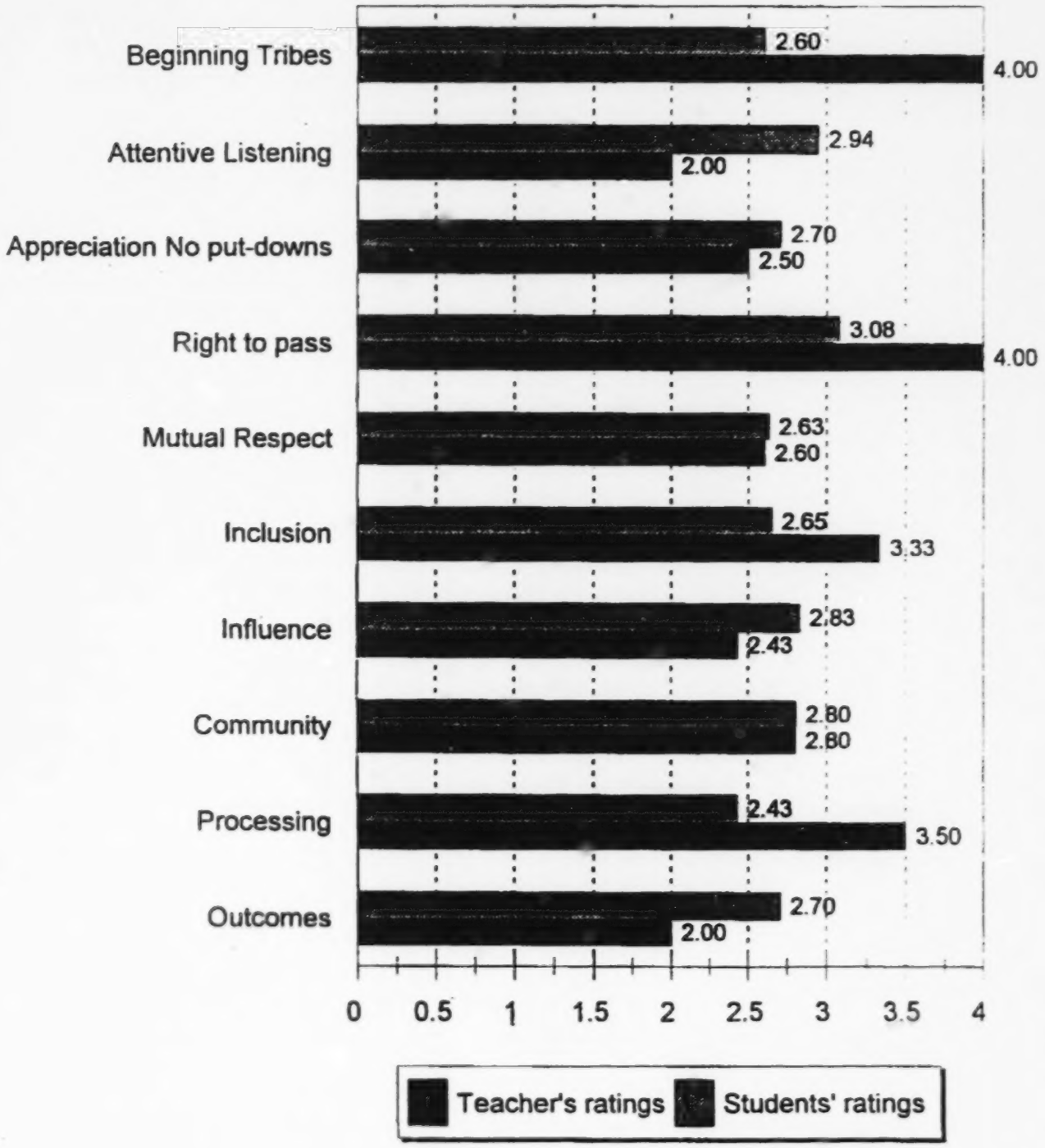
The qualitative data showed the resources and support that would be most helpful in implementing Tribes would be site support groups to dialogue, plan, and share ideas. The major obstacle listed to implementing Tribes was time. Teachers expressed frustrations with the difficulty of "fitting everything into the school day."

Changes reported as a result of Tribes were positive. Significant improvement was reported in student relationships and mutual respect. Teachers reported the climate of the classrooms and school as more comfortable, settled, and respectful. A second important change was the use of the common Tribes language by students and teachers. The common language used throughout a school fosters a sense of community where all adults feel responsible for all students.

Schoolwide changes were consistent with the classroom changes...positive climate and common language were repeatedly mentioned. Staff members repeatedly stated that their school had changed to a safe and positive learning environment.

TRIBES PROCESS GRAPH

Classroom Interactions



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Implications

With all the violence and recent tragedies in our society, it is evident that students must have skills and knowledge beyond the three R's. Some teachers instinctively provide a safe learning environment where children also learn to work with others and make smart decisions. Tribes TLC® allows all teachers to systematically teach children to work on decision making and problem solving, both individually and collaboratively. The process of Tribes is unique. It is a way for educational systems to create and sustain a school-wide environment in which caring and supportive protective factors, active participation, and positive expectations are a reality for every child.

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Acknowledgements

Ms. Aileen Hokama, Central Oahu District Superintendent

Ms. Nancy Latham, Central Oahu Educational Specialist

Aiea Elementary School, Mr. Darryl Galera, Principal and Staff

Hale Kula Elementary School, Mr. Lloyd Uradomo, Principal and Staff

Kipapa Elementary School, Ms. Elsie Tanaka, Principal and Staff

Pearl Ridge Elementary School, Mr. Ray Sugai, Principal, Ms. Carolyn Hamada, Acting Principal, and Staff

Wheeler Elementary School, Mr. Steve Nakasato, Principal and Staff

Ms. Judith Johnson, CEO CenterSource Systems, LLC

Ms. Jeanne Gibbs, author of Tribes: A New Way of Learning and Being Together.

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